



# CHADDESDEN HISTORICAL GROUP



[WWW.CHADDESDENHISTORICALGROUP.CO.UK](http://WWW.CHADDESDENHISTORICALGROUP.CO.UK)

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Do you remember the Chesterfield Arms at the bottom of Nottingham Road? This rare photograph is taken from the Derek Palmer collection in our archives.

## Editorial.

Seven years ago, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2006, 28 people met at the Chaddesden Library to gauge interest with regard to setting up a history group in Chaddesden. This meeting was called by Tony Bowler in response to interest shown in talks he had given on local history matters. Of those 28 people 16 are still actively involved with the Chaddesden Historical Group. Our group has outgrown all expectations from those early days and now with a membership of over 80 and, through our website, a worldwide following ranging from New Zealand to Scotland and many points between. The success and stability of the group is due entirely to the support and enthusiasm of our members. A committee, that has seen many changes over the years, looks after the day to day running of the group but none of that would be possible or even relevant without membership support. Unfortunately as community groups such as ours grow, certain constraints and legal requirements head our way which is why we now have booklets detailing our policies regarding Data Protection, Child Protection and our updated Constitution available at all our meetings should anyone wish to see them. Even our AGM has to be organised with a view to keeping everyone informed of our activities before the event. As with all good structures our group now has the strongest of foundations which enables us to move forward and keep pace with a more modern way ahead. The only way to secure our history is with modern methods and thinking and, like it or not, the Computer, Internet and FaceBook are here to help us, so we must continue to use them. *AJB.*

## LANDSLIP AT NOTTINGHAM ROAD CEMETERY

If you have lived in Chaddesden for any length of time, it's almost certain that someone will have asked you the question: "When exactly did the wall of Nottingham Road Cemetery collapse?" Many people will tell you that this event took place in 1922, others are equally certain that it occurred sometime in 1923, or then again maybe 1924. Now, at long last here is the answer.

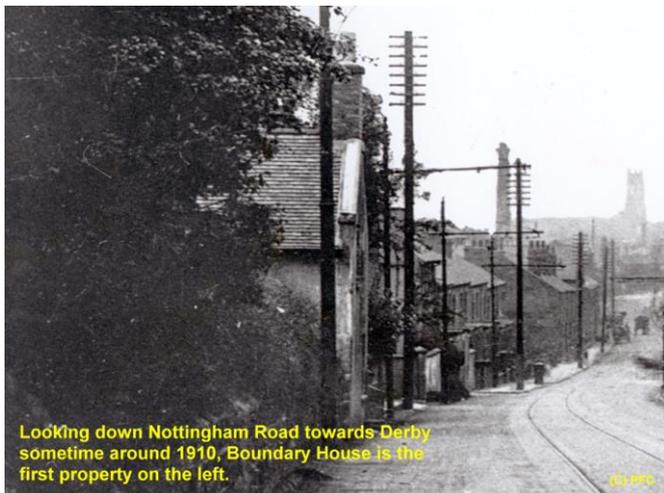
Had you been passing by the cemetery on your way to work in Derby early in the morning of Friday 14 March 1924, you might well have been expecting to see the familiar traffic chaos caused by an assortment of trams, lorries, horses and carts, cars and bicycles all trying to jostle their way along the narrow and inadequate road. What you most certainly would not have anticipated was the sight of a considerable landslip which had exposed coffins in the cemetery and carried others down to road level, scattering some bones about in the process!

This gruesome spectacle was an unforeseen consequence of Derby Corporation's latest road-improvement scheme, for in an effort to widen the road and provide a much-needed pavement on its south side (roughly between the Cemetery Gatehouse and Mason's Paint Works) workmen were systematically removing countless tons of soil from the cemetery perimeter and installing new banking. Unfortunately, just before 9:00 a.m. on this particular morning an area of ground in the cemetery became unstable and tons of earth slipped down into the road below. This must have been rather dangerous, for Nottingham Road cuts deeply into the surrounding land hereabouts and the variation between surface levels in the cemetery and the road is quite significant in places.

Commenting on the incident, that day's edition of the *Derby Daily Telegraph* noted that tarpaulin sheeting had been placed over the affected area by the afternoon. The paper's reporter interviewed someone thought to be the works foreman, who said that falls of this kind were fairly common, but then a correction was printed a few days later when Mr. W. Allsebrook, who was actually in charge of the men, wrote in denying he had made these comments since he was far too busy getting the site cleared, and added that "these things are quite unforeseen." At the next meeting of Derby Town Council in early April 1924, Councillor Frank Porter asked "If it was a fact that coffins and bones had been exposed to public view by a fall of earth on Nottingham Road at the cemetery?", and demanded to know what steps were being taken to rectify the situation. In reply, Alderman Fletcher confirmed that "this had unfortunately happened, but relatives had been consulted, and were satisfied that everything possible had been done under the circumstances."

It is worth emphasising that a landslip rather than a collapsed wall seemingly caused the problem. Today's users of Nottingham Road are, of course, familiar with the massive retaining wall on Cemetery Hill, but back in 1924 the boundary between cemetery and road was apparently marked by a steep (but not vertical) earthen slope terminating at a stone wall bordering the road. In passing, it is interesting to note that the Cemeteries & Garden Allotments Committee of Derby Town Council had previously given permission to tip material excavated in connection with the road widening onto land it had purchased for an extension of the Cemetery down by the Derby Canal.

Some further details about the unfortunate events of 14 March 1924 can be gleaned by examining the pages of the *Derby Evening Telegraph* between November 1983 and January 1984 and also just a few years ago in December 2008, when readers' enquiries prompted others to write in with their recollections. As regards the suggested dates,



Looking down Nottingham Road towards Derby sometime around 1910, Boundary House is the first property on the left.

1922 and 1923 were the most popular years, although one person thought the fall of earth took place as late as 1931 – in fairness this probably related to another, later incident. Two people confirmed that a landslip rather than the collapse of a wall had caused the problem, and one remembered the authorities placing naphtha flares around the site at night-time to warn approaching vehicles of the hazard. By far the most detailed correspondent, and the one who came closest to specifying the precise date, was a lady by the name of Miss Annie Benson Pollard, from Bournemouth, who once lived at Boundary House on the south side of Nottingham

Road. Her family's property, situated across the road from the present number 335, was aptly named because it had been built astride the parish boundary – half in Chaddesden and half in St. Alkmund's, Derby – and fixed to the house wall alongside Nottingham Road was an iron plate recording this fact.

Miss Pollard recalled that in 1924, Derby Corporation began to widen Nottingham Road and during the removal of countless thousands of tons of earth the collapse occurred, which "disturbed some coffins". In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I assume that the landslip was fairly near to her cottage, which stood some feet below the level of the adjacent cemetery. Judging by the census returns the Pollard family had resided hereabouts for many years. In 1901 they were apparently living on the north side of Nottingham Road but then moved into Boundary House some time prior to 1911. I always imagined this property as a tiny cottage, but thanks to a new question on the 1911 census form requiring householders to indicate the number of rooms (including the kitchen but excluding the bathroom) in their home, it seems that Boundary House was evidently a reasonable size for it possessed six rooms in total. Sadly, Miss Pollard said that the 1924 road improvement scheme also involved the demolition of Boundary House, so before long the family left their old home, which the workmen quickly reduced to nothing more than a heap of rubble.

*Peter Cholerton ©2013.*

### **Chaddesden Library**

1 September 1954 to 16 February 2013

Thank you for:

All the visits I loved and books I read throughout my childhood. I remember my feet swinging from my



chair, polished floor and rubber plant and dappled patterns of water reflecting from the roof. For helping me with my homework in my teens and somewhere quiet to sit and read and use your Encyclopaedia Britannica. Being my place of work for 30 years we went through thick and thin together battling the elements that took their toll upon you. With the aid of maintenance and CCTV, and

not to mention luck, you stood the test of time.

I will miss you but it's really the books I read and the people I met within your four walls that made you the welcoming place you were. May your legacy of "welcome" go from you to the new library nearby.

Farewell "Dear Old Chadd" Library

*Mary Adelman (nee Singleton)*

### **Disclaimer.**

*Whilst every attempt has been made to trace original ownership of photographs, pictures and articles used in this Newsletter we apologise for any acknowledgement that we have failed to make. Neither the editor nor committee of Chaddesden Historical Group guarantee the accuracy of items submitted for publication in this newsletter. The Committee wish to thank West Park School, Derby Local Studies Library and Derby Telegraph for their continued support in the production of this newsletter. AJB.*

### **Contact Us**

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## Notices.

### THE NOTTINGHAM ROAD WAR MEMORIAL

The war memorial pictured can be found in Nottingham Road Cemetery about 60 metres south east of the main entrance archway. The lower panel reads, "In Glorious Memory of the men of Nottingham Road Derby who gave their lives also those who served 1914 – 1919". That is Nottingham Road, Derby not Chaddesden (? Ed) so it is a memorial to servicemen from outside our parish.

The memorial originally stood on Nottingham Road nearly opposite the end of St. Mark's Road where the bus lane is now. It is believed to have been privately funded, possibly by Thomas B Robinson, publican of the Welcome Tavern, 66 Nottingham Road or George Parker Gibson, grocer of 108 Nottingham Road and chairman of Derby Licensed Victuallers' Association.

After the Second World War, the memorial was moved into our parish to stand outside the Royal British Legion premises at the junction of Roe Farm Lane and Hillcrest Road. Following the closure of the RBL club it was moved to its present location early in the 1980's.

The upper panel reads,

#### For God King and Country

Sergt Millington A	Gamble W A
Cpl Tocknell H C	Hancock W
L Cpl Dyer G	Hirst W H
L Cpl Mitchell P	Lee R J
L Cpl Needham W	O Brian J
Gunr Ayre C	Passey S A
Gunr Day R L	Parker R
Pte Allsop F	Payne J W
Applegate H E	Rogers J
Beck S M	Tomlinson J W
Brooks A	Walker F
Cook F	Wilson G E
Coulson H B	Yeomans W
Pte . Eaton A	Cpl Taylor P
1 <sup>st</sup> A/M Winfield A	Cpl Barradell H
Pte Hancock W W	Pte Ray A C



Do you recognise any of the names? Can you remember the memorial being at either of its previous locations? Is there anything else that you know about it?

Any information to Peter Barnes (telephone 01332 673234, email [northwoodave14@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:northwoodave14@hotmail.co.uk)) please.

## Your Committee.

### **Tony Bowler**

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